

*Sub A1*  
comprising:

1. A device for handling or storing one or more items,  
comprising:  
a pair of generally rigid jaw members of polymer or ceramic  
material, each having a hinge end and an outer end, each jaw member  
5 including an inner retaining surface and an outer press surface extending  
between the ends of the jaw member,  
the jaw members being connected together at their hinge ends,  
such that the jaw members (i) have a first, self-sustaining open position in  
which the outer ends are spaced apart to define a receiving space and the inner  
10 retaining surfaces are generally not facing one another whereby the one or  
more items may pass into and between the jaw members without requiring  
external pressure to maintain the jaw members in the open position, (ii) have a  
plurality of second, closed positions in which the outer ends are engaged and  
the inner retaining surfaces are in confronting relationship, and (iii) are self-  
15 aligned such that the outer ends automatically engage together upon applying  
pressure on the outer press surfaces.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein said jaw members are of  
plastic material.

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3. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members is  
integrally attached to an item that is handled or stored.

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4. The device of claim 1 further comprising an axle connecting said jaw members together.

5 5. The device of claim 1 further comprising a hinge strap connecting the jaw members together.

6. The device of claim 1 wherein at least one jaw member has an indicia surface, and further comprising a label applied to the indicia surface.

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prk 37 7. The device of claim 1 further comprising an engaging mechanism at the outer ends of the jaw members.

8. The device of claim 7 wherein the engaging mechanism comprises barbed teeth on a first one of said jaw members and a pawl for engaging the teeth on a second one of said jaw members.

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9. The device of claim 8 wherein the pawl has an engaging position and a disengaging position.

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10. The device of claim 9 wherein the pawl is driven by spring force into its engaging position, and must be manually pushed from its engaging position to its disengaging position.

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11. The device of claim 9 wherein the pawl is driven by spring force into its disengaging position, and further comprising a mechanical latch coupled to the pawl to hold the pawl in its engaged position.

5 12. The device of claim 8 wherein said teeth and pawl are formed on said outer press surfaces of said jaw members.

10 13. The device of claim 8 wherein said teeth and pawl are formed on side surfaces of said jaw members.

14. The device of claim 8 wherein said teeth and pawl are formed on said inner retaining surfaces of said jaw members.

15 15. The device of claim 1 further comprising an engaging mechanism at the hinge end of the jaw members.

16. The device of claim 15 wherein the engaging mechanism comprises mating teeth in said jaw members at their hinge ends.

20 17. The device of claim 15 wherein the engaging mechanism comprises abutting frictional surfaces on said jaw members at their hinge ends.

18. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members further comprises a clip attachable to an object.

19. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members further comprises a hook.

20. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members defines a slot attachable to an object.

21. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members defines an attachment hole.

22. The device of claim 1 wherein one of said jaw members further comprises a handle.

23. A method of using a device for handling or storing one or more items, the device having a pair of generally rigid jaws, each jaw having a hinge end and an outer end with an inner retaining surface and an outer press surface extending between the ends of the jaw, the jaws being connected together at their hinge ends, such that the device (i) has a first, self-sustaining open position in which the outer ends are spaced apart with the inner retaining surfaces generally not facing one another, (ii) has a plurality of second, closed positions in which the outer ends are engaged and the inner retaining surfaces are in confronting relationship, and (iii) jaws are self-aligned such that the outer ends automatically engage together upon applying pressure on the outer press surfaces, the method comprising:

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placing the jaws of the device into the open position whereby that position is sustained without requiring external pressure to the jaws;

passing the one or more items through a space defined between the outer ends in the open position of the device; and

5 placing the device into one of the plurality of closed positions with the one or more items therein by applying pressure on the outer press surfaces of the jaws until the inner retaining surfaces surround the one or more items.

10 24. The method of claim 23 adapted for handling or storing one or more items, further comprising bundling the one or more items such that the width of the bundle is greater than the width of any one item in the bundle, and passing the bundled item through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device.

15 25. The method of claim 23 adapted for handling or storing clothing, further comprising gathering said clothing together and passing the gathered clothing through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device.

20 26. The method of claim 25 adapted to handling or storing accessory clothing including one or more of belts, socks, hosiery, underwear, scarves, ties, and jewelry.

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27. The method of claim 25 adapted to handling or storing belts, further comprising passing one of said jaw members through buckles of said belts and then placing the device into one of the plurality of closed positions.

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28. The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing keyrings, further comprising passing one of said jaw members through said keyrings and then placing the device into one of the plurality of closed positions.

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29. The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing fabric, further comprising gathering said fabric and passing the gathered fabric through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device.

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30. The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing one or more bags, further comprising cinching closed a gathered top of the one or more bags.

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*Print a b >* 31. The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing one or more bags, further comprising passing handles for said one or more bags through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device.

32. The method of claim 23 adapted to handling or storing plantings, further comprising passing said planting through the space defined

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by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in its closed position around the planting.

33. The method of claim 32 used in mending a break in a planting, comprising passing the planting through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in its closed position around the planting in the area of the break.

34. The method of claim 23 used in training a planting, further comprising passing two parts of said planting through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in its closed position around the two parts of said planting.

35. The method of claim 23 used in grafting two plantings, further comprising passing at least one of said plantings through the space defined by the outer ends in the open position of the device, and then placing the device in its closed position around the plantings in the area of the graft.

36. The method of claim 23 adapted to promote child safety, wherein one or more items that a child should not unbundle or separate are passed through the space defined between the outer ends in the open position of the device.

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37. The method of claim 36 wherein the items that a child should not separate are the handles of adjacent cabinet doors, and the doors are placed in a closed position prior to closing the device around the handles.

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38. The method of claim 23 adapted to personal adornment, wherein the items are parts of a person's body or clothing worn on the person, and the device is placed in its closed position so as to be visible on the person's body or clothing.

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